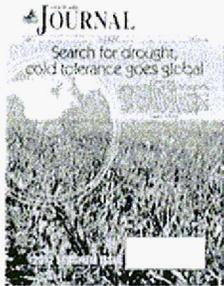


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Kansas growers continue to meet customers' needs with record 2009 crop

Kansas

Kansas corn producers are expected to harvest a record 518 million bushel corn crop this year as part of the nation's 13 billion harvest. The projected U.S. harvest will just about tie the record 2007 harvest of 13.1 billion bushels. Farmers continue to prove they can meet the needs of their customers, according to Kansas Corn Growers Association Executive Director Jere White.

"What is interesting is that in 2008, the year of the so-called corn shortage, we produced 12.1 billion bushels which at the time was the second largest crop in history," White said. "So in the last three years, we are seeing the three largest corn crops in history in the United States."

The 2009 U.S. corn crop is expected to have an average yield of 162 bushels per acre, a record yield. Kansas Corn Commission Chairman Mike Brzon of Courtland pointed out that farmers are using improved technology and growing practices to produce more corn per acre.

"I wish people would look at the great advances we have made in agriculture that allow us to grow more corn on fewer acres and at the same time substantially reduce our use of fertilizers and pesticides, and we've reduced erosion as well," Brzon said. "We don't seem to get credit for any of that."

In 2008, many predicted a corn shortage, and some groups called for a stop in the use of corn for ethanol to prevent the shortage. Corn-based ethanol was blamed for sharp spikes in consumer food prices. Markets joined the clamor, with speculators raising the price of corn near \$8 per bushel for a short time in the summer of 2008. That fall, corn producers harvested the second largest crop in history, and ended the year with a significant corn carryover of 1.7 billion bushels.

"Many special interest groups have found that fear is the best weapon," White said. "Last year, anti-ethanol groups used fear to attack corn producers and the ethanol industry blaming ethanol for a fictitious corn shortage. In the end, it was corn's customers as well as consumers who were hurt by speculators who bought into the fear and elevated crop prices to record levels."

Higher prices across the board were blamed on corn and ethanol last year. The AMC movie theater chain blamed an increase in ticket prices on higher popcorn costs.

"You can imagine the markup on popcorn at a movie theater when you pay more than \$5 for a bag of popcorn. That was simply a bogus excuse," White said. "But what concerns me is that while commodity prices have dropped dramatically, consumer food prices have not dropped that much. Last year food prices increased 5.1 percent and food companies blamed corn and ethanol while they pocketed record profits. They were in a hurry to raise the prices, but seem a little slower to lower them even at a time when consumers are suffering through a recession."

The Kansas Corn Commission was one of several corn grower groups that created the Corn Farmers Coalition, a national effort to provide accurate information about corn farming. The Corn Farmers Coalition used information from credible sources like the US Department of Agriculture to make sure decision-makers in Washington, DC and others were well informed about today's corn production.

"I don't think people understand how much farming has changed especially in the last 10 years. Just like any business, technology has made us so much more efficient," Brzon said. "Last year we had floods in some isolated areas and people thought the corn crop was doomed. This year, we had late planting and a cool growing season in many areas. By overcoming these adversities with near record results, we are proving that our growers can provide a reliable supply of corn for all of our customers year after year."

The Kansas Corn Commission is a nine member grower board that invests the half-cent per bushel corn checkoff in the areas of research, market development, education and promotion. For more information, visit www.ksgains.com.

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